

Accomplished Principal Standards

Standard I: Leadership for Results

Accomplished principals employ leadership practices that result in the highest performance for all students and adults. To achieve these results, they understand that they must develop the leadership capacity of others. These dynamic, forward-thinking principals build collaborative organizations that realize and sustain positive change. They act on personal insight, experiences, research, and data to purposefully enhance teacher practices for improved student performance.

Accomplished principals have leadership prowess and willingly give of themselves to meet the high demands of a complex, evolving human organization. They are able to stand with others but are also able to stand alone. These principals first understand who they are and what they are passionate about, and are able to identify their strengths in relationship to their leadership role. They are self-directed leaders who monitor, manage, and motivate themselves and others. They balance the intellectual, emotional, and physical demands of leadership and demonstrate resilience.

Accomplished principals understand the complex and challenging task of effectively leading a learning community. These principals recognize that leadership is a shared professional undertaking. They appropriately share leadership with those who have the requisite skills to lead. These principals build leadership capacity in others to ensure the stability of the organization even in their absence.

To lead effective organizations, accomplished principals embody and strategically employ interrelated aspects of leadership that require a balance of substance and style. Such principals demonstrate these aspects, as follows:

- Leading by example
- Thinking in a forward fashion
- Thinking strategically
- Working collaboratively
- Leading change
- Implementing ideas and changes strategically
- Building organizational capacity

Leading by Example

Accomplished principals believe that every student and adult will achieve their highest potential. They act in accordance with that value by placing students at the core of all decisions. To lead others in accomplishing common goals and objectives, these principals demonstrate multiple, dynamic attributes. They have integrity and consistently display behaviors that garner trust, respect, and the allegiance of the learning community. Accomplished principals are confident and tenacious in their pursuit of high standards. They approach situations with courage and determination while remaining flexible, inclusive, and open to new ideas. These principals embrace accountability, holding themselves and others in the learning community accountable for results.

Accomplished principals skillfully draw on experience. They know how to choose and use appropriate strategies and skills in different situations. When faced with a challenging or controversial decision that is in the best interests of academic achievement, these principals explain the context of the situation, provide background, and communicate transparently. They strive to reach consensus without compromising the interests of the parties involved. Accomplished principals have the courage to step into any situation and

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do what is best for students. For example, such a principal may decide to eliminate remedial math classes and require that all students take grade-level courses and that all teachers provide appropriate interventions.

Thinking in a Forward Fashion

Accomplished principals are knowledgeable about global trends; they understand and realize that forward thinking is paramount to preparing students, and the adults who serve their needs, for a global society. They relish opportunities to purposefully advance the organization, exhibiting an entrepreneurial spirit, a pioneering attitude, a technologically innovative approach, and risk-taking that is grounded in reality. These principals are driven to push the organization to new heights in meeting needs based on the complexity of the learning community.

Accomplished principals recognize students as digital learners, with an unprecedented ability to access, acquire, and integrate information. Because technology is instrumental in bringing the world to the learner, these principals make it a priority to acquire and utilize state-of-the-art technologies to increase interconnectivity in the organization. They find ways to facilitate communication in the learning community and the world at large through multiple forms of media.

Remembering that students today also will be the global citizens of tomorrow, accomplished principals raise student awareness of the world around them. They arrange for students' exposure to multiple cultures. They know that forward thinking is not only about technology but also about skills to adapt to a changing and more diverse world. Because it is impossible to imagine the world in which today's students will function as adults, accomplished principals ensure that students develop the critical skills to succeed in that future. As an example of such forward thinking, they would look at opportunities to bring in members of the business community to discuss the transferable skills that students need for flexibility in their careers. These principals remember that preparation is not only about content but also about the skills needed to access emerging technologies and resources.

Thinking Strategically

Accomplished principals are intentional strategic thinkers. They possess and maintain a deep knowledge of best practices and current research within and outside education. These principals plan for high performance by diagnosing needs, designing solutions, prescribing actions, and evaluating effectiveness. In charting a course of action, accomplished principals pursue diverse opinions. They generate collective buy-in by strategically involving stakeholders in the process of continuous improvement. For example, they may use appropriate electronic systems to collect and sort feedback from stakeholders on a particular issue—such as school safety, the budget, or the school improvement plan—and send updates to stakeholders.

Accomplished principals seek balance and congruency between the individual and organizational dimensions of the learning community. They are cognizant of competing tensions in the organization and diligently maintain the focus on the core business of learning. Accomplished principals understand their role as it relates to the body governing the organization. When making decisions that affect the entire organization, these principals explain and communicate how the individual systems and processes within and outside the learning community will interrelate to support the decision—from classroom use to bus pickup to food service to district testing schedules. They consider the cascading effects of decisions, such as changes in schedules for exams. Although such decisions may have unintended consequences,

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accomplished principals try to minimize and plan for such problems. They do not permit the demands of the organization to paralyze their leadership or diminish their drive toward achieving instructional goals.

Working Collaboratively

Accomplished principals foster, encourage, celebrate, and honor multiple perspectives and voices, thereby creating an inclusive environment in which all are equally valued and energized in the pursuit of learning. They prioritize communication, exemplified by discussions that accelerate the work and the progress of the organization. By leveraging the power of relationships, including all stakeholders, and appropriately sharing leadership, these principals promote cohesion, collective effort, and cooperation to elevate organizational capacity. They inspire, motivate, and unite all stakeholders, within and outside the learning community, so that the priorities of the larger community are reflected in the planning process.

Accomplished principals seek opportunities to work with others in their extended organization as well as with the greater community. They understand that their role and that of their organization exist in a greater local, state, and national context. These principals realize that businesses, institutions of higher education, faith based, and social organizations are integral to the learning community. They not only seek advice, input, and resources from these entities but also find ways for them to contribute to the well-being of the community.

Through empowerment and engagement of all individuals, accomplished principals collaboratively lead organizations in which they gain commitment, focus effort, unify action, and enhance morale. These principals consciously and expertly utilize formal and informal collaboration to achieve success in the learning community. For example, they establish committees of internal and external stakeholders to contribute to and provide guidance to foster initiatives and programs. Accomplished principals have the fortitude to know when to redirect efforts based on changing circumstances or goals. As a result, their organizations are imbued with a purposeful sense of urgency and unified around the mission of improving student learning.

Accomplished principals have the ability and experience to craft solutions to problems by working within the learning community, building an environment in which collaboration is the norm. For example, a group of teachers may work together to develop a way to manage an increase in second-language students. Accomplished principals support such efforts. They tap the expertise and abilities of the staff to generate solutions for problems.

Leading Change

Accomplished principals lead change as they build sustainable organizations that are driven by the pursuit of excellence. They understand that change is constant. These principals are firmly grounded in their understanding of change theory and apply it appropriately. They are aware of different change models and of the environment in which they operate. Accomplished principals know who the key decision makers are, and they know how to initiate, implement, and sustain change while maintaining the stability of the organization. These principals know and anticipate where pressure points are and continuously apply positive pressure, so that the learning community is constantly learning and growing. They capitalize on opportunities to advance the vision and mission.

Accomplished principals tackle challenges. They skillfully negotiate with stakeholders within and outside the learning community. Outside the immediate learning community, for example, they might meet with

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those who resist change in order to engage and involve them in moving the learning community forward. These principals lay the groundwork before change occurs. Facilitating change and generating commitment to it—and thereby maximizing the potential of the organization in an ever-changing world—is a critical focus of accomplished principals. When facilitating change, these principals incorporate external and internal support. For example, they may help people understand the change from a letter-based grading system to a standards-based grading system by such acts as having focus groups, getting public comment, and engaging in community dialogue.

Accomplished principals understand the demand and capacity for change, and are willing to take calculated risks for continuous improvement. These principals clearly convey how a change will increase the performance of students and adults. They are vigilant in scanning for opportunities that benefit all. To that end, they create cogent systems and processes that enable the organization to implement and sustain change.

Implementing Ideas and Changes Strategically

Accomplished principals skillfully realize the vision and mission by turning words into actions. Through a collaborative process, these principals communicate the vision in a way that enables others to see and understand their roles in achieving the mission. They ensure that instructional and operational systems are aligned to support the implementation of the vision, vigorously guarding against distractions and abandoning redundancies.

Accomplished principals not only set the right targets but also get the right results. They conduct constant critical analysis, asking “Am I focusing on the right thing to get us where we want to go?” To do so, they gather, analyze, and leverage data to make sure decisions address organizational needs. They scan what is taking place in real time and make appropriate adjustments by constantly refining systems. These principals correctly identify root causes for lack of performance and establish and monitor appropriate leading and lagging performance indicators. Accomplished principals are proactive, using data to anticipate and appropriately intervene, if necessary, rather than responding to failure—using data for planning as well as for describing the past. They know that lagging indicators can be leading indicators of other issues—for example, weekly student referral rates may be a leading indicator of student suspension, which may be a lagging indicator of student grade-level retention.

Accomplished principals create systems to access real-time data to purposefully monitor progress toward goals. For example, they may use current data to assess where students are in a particular content area in the fall, instead of at the end of year, to keep students on track. Another example is having quarterly and mid-year assessments of school safety. Other examples might include looking at student behaviors and progress, staff practice and performance, transient and migrant rates, referrals, or levels of parent participation to identify trends and establish priorities. These principals use data creatively to monitor, change, and improve on problems and situations that may occur.

Accomplished principals ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. They conduct difficult conversations when necessary and hold themselves and others accountable for results. In those conversations, they bring about clarity, thus sharpening the focus for the purpose of action. These principals foster confidence, credibility, and trust by ensuring that their decisions and actions are transparent, inclusive, and consistent with the organization’s vision and mission.

Building Organizational Capacity

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Accomplished principals realize that the strength of an organization lies in its human capital. They understand that the effectiveness of teachers directly correlates to increased student performance. These principals take the primary responsibility to attract, retain, and develop high-quality teachers and other staff. They clearly identify the efforts, skills, and attitudes required to carry out people's responsibilities to achieve the organization's mission. These principals communicate expectations and are courageous in holding everyone accountable—including themselves. They value and respect the strengths of individuals, and they create support systems to maximize the performance and retention of the right people. Accomplished principals create and maintain a work environment in which people improve their knowledge and develop their skills, to enhance the work that they do with students.

Accomplished principals cultivate the different talents of everyone within the organization. These principals consciously seek to develop leadership capacity throughout the organization, by ensuring that different lateral experiences and promotional opportunities exist. They develop the capacity of others through training, guided practice, and mentoring. As they do so, teachers and staff take on more responsibility and more roles—formal and informal—that involve leadership. For example, an accomplished principal would develop the supervisory skills of a custodian, enabling the custodian to move from doing his or her own job well to leading others in doing their jobs well. As another example, when moving the organization to a structure of small learning communities, such a principal would provide professional development for teachers who are going to assume the role of leading cross-content-area teams. This principal would provide professional development to support teachers in acquiring the appropriate skill set for working with adults.

Accomplished principals design and implement succession plans—for every position in the organization—that allow for leadership and growth. They provide for sustainability and stability by ensuring that the organization has a depth of talent to move the learning community forward.

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Standard II: Vision and Mission

Accomplished principals lead and inspire the learning community to develop, articulate, and commit to a shared and compelling vision of enhanced student learning and adult practice. These principals advance the mission through collaborative processes that focus and drive the organization toward the vision.

Accomplished principals are visionary leaders who put student learning first. Central to their vision and mission is the belief that all students and adults will perform at high levels. These principals direct, guide, and empower stakeholders to prepare each student to thrive in the present and to have the skills and dispositions to shape his or her future. In the learning communities of accomplished principals, the vision and the mission are more than the written word; their influence is seen, heard, and felt in the classrooms, in the hallways, on the playgrounds and playing fields, and in the community.

In collaboration with stakeholders, accomplished principals set forth the framework of the vision and mission and encourage the creativity and flexibility in strategies that will make improved student learning a reality. They communicate with and engage all stakeholders in a compelling manner, transforming the environment and attitude from one of compliance to one of shared commitment and shared responsibility.

Accomplished principals consistently articulate the common vision and promote an actionable mission to advance teaching and learning, resulting in increased student learning. In doing so, they foster ownership of the vision by all stakeholders. Employing appropriate strategic management tools, these principals fully realize the stated goals and objectives related to the mission.

Collaborative Design and Development

Accomplished principals collaboratively work with stakeholders to create a shared vision and mission that is relevant and compelling to the present and the future of the organization. These visionary leaders inspire others to embrace their roles and responsibilities in the creation and pursuit of the vision and the mission. To that end, they make certain that teachers, students, and all stakeholders, including those who are less vocal, are heard and are included in the process. They establish a culture in which divergent points of view are encouraged and valued in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the vision and mission. For example, these principals may hold community-based forums with subsets of stakeholders to get their input on initiatives and to engage them in contributing to the actualization of the vision and mission.

Accomplished principals communicate both internally and externally to stakeholders to ensure that they understand and can articulate the vision. These principals bring people into the act of determining goals, objectives, and action steps to support the mission. They incorporate input from external partners who have human, fiscal, and material resources and work collaboratively to support the learning community—including parents, faith-based groups, businesses, higher education institutions, and legislators.

Because accomplished principals realize that strong home-school connections are critical to achieving the mission, they intentionally engage parents, guardians, and community networks for direct involvement in student learning. Using traditional and non-traditional settings, these principals find creative ways to connect with stakeholders and set up opportunities to gather input from parents and from community, business, and municipal leaders. These principals continuously inform and engage stakeholders about the

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direction required to achieve and evolve the goals of the mission. For example, they use multiple mediums to reach all stakeholders, from print to digital to face-to-face interactions.

Implementation and Realization

Accomplished principals ensure that the collaboratively developed mission is equitable and easily translated into actions. These principals realize that stakeholders must be able to articulate the mission and, more importantly, fully understand their roles in it and their responsibilities for incorporating it into the culture of the learning community.

Accomplished principals understand that to be effective, a vision and a mission must be supported by a strategic implementation plan. Through ongoing training, these principals ensure that all teachers, staff members, and other stakeholders have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to execute the action steps and achieve the goals in that plan. For example, they may meet with bus drivers to make them aware of their impact on student attitudes and behavior, and offer training and strategies, followed by ongoing dialogue and support. These principals ensure that all actions in the learning community strengthen the instructional program and are congruent with the vision and the mission.

Accomplished principals identify and anticipate obstacles to the achievement of the vision and mission and work to overcome them. They capitalize on those opportunities as teachable moments, not only to refine the plan and make necessary mid-course corrections but also to enhance a culture of teamwork, cohesion, credibility, and trust.

Reflection and Recommitment

Accomplished principals are actively engaged in continuously monitoring progress toward achievement of the vision and mission. On an ongoing basis, they collaboratively review progress related to goals and benchmark data, making necessary adjustments to the plan to keep the organization moving forward. From this analysis, they incorporate the voices of stakeholders to make decisions that lead to change and improvement of student performance and teacher practices. These principals collaboratively refine goals and establish new benchmarks as the organization progresses toward achieving the mission.

Accomplished principals persistently keep stakeholders focused on the goals of the plan. They prioritize appropriately and relentlessly. These principals use time, systems, and personnel effectively, so that day-to-day distractions do not deter from the achievement of the mission and core business of the organization. They regularly initiate professional conversations and engage in discussion to determine whether they are on target. They share new information to empower, encourage, and enlighten stakeholders, thereby reinforcing commitment. These principals initiate discussions to encourage stakeholders to review, revise, and improve actions they take toward achieving goals. For example, after discovering from a root-cause analysis of data that students are underperforming on the writing section of a literacy test, these principals might establish an initiative through which teachers in all content areas infuse writing skills into their instruction.

Championing the Vision and Mission

As the vision keepers for their learning communities, accomplished principals garner internal and external support. They strategically identify when and how they communicate the vision and mission. These principals articulate a compelling message that communicates the vision for the present and the future of

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the learning community. Their messages paint a clear picture of the values and beliefs embodied in the culture of the learning community and communicate a sense of focus and urgency. The messages help stakeholders identify the current reality and the preferred future. Accomplished principals share the responsibility for communicating the vision and mission with members of the learning community and develop the leadership capacity of those members to share the message as well. They cultivate every member of the learning community to be an advocate for the vision and mission.

Accomplished principals tailor their messages to resonate with different stakeholder groups and inspire them to support the vision and mission. For example, they foster positive relationships with local media and community groups by meeting with them regularly. These principals seek out and embrace innovative mediums for communicating the vision and mission. They are adept at using branding strategies, including symbols, logos, and mottoes, to market the vision and mission. These principals are relentless in revisiting, reflecting on, and recommitting all stakeholders to the vision and mission.

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Standard III: Teaching and Learning

Accomplished principals ensure that teaching and learning are the primary focus of the organization. As stewards for learning, they make certain that all adults have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to ensure that students are successful. These principals lead the implementation of a rigorous, relevant, diverse curriculum and appropriate assessments of student learning. They know a full range of pedagogy, recognize appropriate utilization, and work effectively with teachers to enhance practice. Using a variety of measures, accomplished principals consistently evaluate the success of teaching and learning.

Teaching and learning is central to the work of accomplished principals. Every thought, every word, and every action focuses and engages all stakeholders to further learning and to establish a learning environment that develops the whole student. These principals instill a purposeful sense of urgency throughout the learning community, resulting in high performance for each student and adult.

Accomplished principals consciously advance teaching and learning as the core business. They oversee the planning and development of the curriculum, lead its implementation, develop systems to evaluate its effectiveness, and make adjustments as necessary. These principals develop a comprehensive learning experience with rigorous and relevant academic programming that aligns the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment practices, providing a variety of opportunities for all students to reach learning goals. They collaboratively set high expectations for all students, staff, and community members and create opportunities for every student and adult to meet those expectations. To maintain standards of high expectations, accomplished principals continually ask the questions, “Who is not learning, why not, and what are we going to do about it?”

Planning and Development for Learning

Accomplished principals ensure that the instructional program is relevant and forward-thinking. They act on the imperative that students must be prepared for a future of undetermined challenges and needs; thus these principals ensure that the curriculum is rich with experiences that will develop students’ capacity for living in, working in, and contributing to a global society. They guarantee that classroom experiences include many opportunities for problem solving, critical thinking, and social learning and meet diverse and targeted learning needs.

Accomplished principals collaborate with others to ensure that materials, support, and training are relevant and appropriate, incorporate high expectations for all stakeholders, and reflect a balanced curriculum. These principals know how to access and use the professional expertise in the networks within and outside the learning community. They may work through partnerships with civic and community groups to ensure that teachers, staff, and students have access to and support for the use of appropriate technology, instructional materials, and resources.

Accomplished principals effectively communicate the focus on learning and engage support for the learning process. They actively engage all stakeholders in formal and informal dialogue, building a sense of urgency and ownership in the pursuit of established learning goals. Their communication is interactive: they seek and welcome feedback and input from diverse sources, with the aim of continuously improving learning.

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Accomplished principals work with staff members to become proficient in culturally relevant practices and in the consistent infusion of technology. Because they understand that curricula are not classroom dependent, they help staff reach beyond the classroom to provide diverse opportunities. These principals involve and engage the community and its resources in the work of the learning community. For example, these principals could arrange externships, link to university and skill center programs, and develop online learning facilities. Such principals may use online learning tools to provide access to courses that enrich the curriculum, so as to enhance academic rigor and relevance.

Collaboratively Implementing Curricula

Accomplished principals lead the implementation of a balanced, rigorous, relevant, diverse, and standards-based curriculum. These principals apply their thorough understanding of the complexity of pedagogy to support teachers in making informed choices about matching instructional strategies to the curriculum.

Accomplished principals identify and creatively minimize or eliminate barriers and obstacles to learning. They structure time and resources to ensure that teachers work collaboratively to examine student work, have professional conversations, and adjust their teaching practices accordingly. These principals empower others to solve challenges to learning. They know what questions to ask, how to help people answer their own questions, and how to problem solve, whatever the situation might be. Accomplished principals ensure that teachers systematically and regularly observe each others' work and share effective practices. These principals learn from teachers' experiences and use the findings to shape and influence professional development.

Understanding that staff members are on a continuum of development, accomplished principals provide thoughtful support for all staff members at every stage of practice. They do this by developing a common understanding of effective teaching practices and clear expectations of performance.

Accomplished principals identify individual teachers' needs and provide appropriate strategic support. That support might include a well-crafted program for teacher induction and mentoring, professional learning opportunities matched to the various stages of teachers' professional careers, and new roles and responsibilities for experienced staff members.

Accomplished principals understand adult learning theory and employ a variety of strategies that are appropriate to the intended outcomes. These principals provide teachers with professional learning that is aligned with the vision, goals, and objectives of the organization. They continually evaluate the learning opportunities provided to staff members and collaborate to ensure that professional learning meets their needs and improves student learning.

Continuously Monitoring, Evaluating, and Adjusting

Accomplished principals identify and use a variety of methods and measures to analyze performance. They know what information to seek, how to gather it, and how to analyze it to make informed decisions to support high levels of performance. They are skilled at data disaggregation and interpretation for the purpose of analyzing areas of strength and growth and determining paths to improvement in learning. These principals are adept at helping teachers analyze data and identify opportunities for improvement and for sustaining successes. For example, accomplished principals who perceive a gap in the instructional program would design a structure to allow teachers to align content with state standards.

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Such principals would encourage teachers to take the process to another level by creating an action plan for teaching week by week throughout the school year, and then provide feedback to the principals. They empower teachers to change their classroom practices to adapt content in ways that contribute to student learning.

Accomplished principals are consistently present where teaching and learning occur. They model, coach, and mentor in order to support others to grow their practice. For example, these principals use regular structured classroom visits with timely feedback on performance as one method of participating in observations of teaching and learning. Accomplished principals collaborate with others to collect and analyze information from multiple sources—qualitative and quantitative, formative and summative. For example, they work with leadership teams or horizontal and vertical teams to keep data as a focus in the building on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis—and use those data to monitor and evaluate student performance and to inform teacher practice at the classroom level.

Accomplished principals ensure the attainment of student and adult learning goals. If goals are not met, these principals do what is necessary to identify causes and work collaboratively to seek and implement remedies. They ensure that appropriate interventions are consistently provided for students and adults who are not meeting targeted goals, without compromising the opportunity for all to engage in the full program of the learning community.

Accomplished principals demonstrate transparency by continually communicating the results of individual students' and school-wide performance. They make sure that the academic progress of the learning community is visible and accessible. Progress may be displayed internally—for example, in charts and graphs for staff use; external displays of progress may include examples of students' achievements in academics, the arts, and athletics. These principals lead the celebration of the attainment of learning goals.

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Standard IV: Knowledge of Students and Adults

Accomplished principals ensure that each student and adult in the learning community is known and valued. These principals develop systems so that individuals are known socially and emotionally as well as intellectually, to support the individuals and their learning and achievement.

Accomplished principals value people as individuals. In the interest of valuing students and adults, these principals create systems and procedures to ensure that every student is connected consistently in meaningful ways with at least one caring adult advocate, and that every adult is connected in meaningful ways with other adults. These principals are keenly aware that building relationships is fundamental in establishing a positive learning environment.

STUDENTS

Accomplished principals ensure that each student is known and valued. Regardless of the focus, size, demographics, or grade configuration of the learning community, these principals purposefully and intentionally design and implement systems and procedures to engage each student. Accomplished principals communicate information from such systems to their staff members. For example, they may create face-to-face or digital systems that enable horizontal and vertical teams to meet regularly to discuss students and problem solve for their benefit. To assure that every student has a consistent relationship with an adult, they may establish an advisory system, smaller learning communities within the larger one, or other support systems.

Understanding of Child and Adolescent Development

Accomplished principals are well versed in child and adolescent development theory and proven research. They anticipate and address students' emotional, psychological, and social needs and ensure that programs are in place to meet those needs. These principals empower students to become responsible and advocate for their own learning. They instill high expectations for students, so that students will have high aspirations for themselves and a personal sense of efficacy.

Accomplished principals make certain that each student is known as an individual with unique needs and strengths, and then helped to find and own his or her place in the learning community. These principals ensure that every student feels like an integral part of the learning community and understands how their learning is important to themselves and their community. They reach out and make sure that opportunities exist for all students to feel that they belong, especially those who may be disengaged.

Understanding of Home Structures

Accomplished principals understand how integral the student's environment is to his or her development. These principals appreciate the family and social dynamics of each student. They recognize each student as a member of a family or a personal network and as a community member. They honor diverse home structures and recognize the challenges some structures pose. These principals recognize potential bias in the learning community and intervene when practices may marginalize students. For example, for students who may not have a place to do their homework in the evening, these principals might establish opportunities to complete homework at alternative times.

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Accomplished principals capitalize on the strengths of families and personal networks while providing interventions, support, and resources to meet students' needs. These principals create a system within the learning community to increase meaningful family involvement. For example, they might create a room with digital and print resources where parents or guardians can access information to support their children or their own learning. Accomplished principals create a culture in which parents or guardians feel welcome and essential to the learning environment. For example, they may arrange for meetings at convenient locations in the community.

Scaffolding Community Support

Accomplished principals understand the spectrum of student contexts in the learning community and scaffold supports to respond to that diversity accordingly. These principals may enlist social programs, civic and community organizations, and faith-based organizations, as well as informal supports, to provide resources to meet students' needs. Examples might include connecting students with programs that meet such needs as after-school food sources, health care services, employment opportunities, social services, and educational services.

Celebrating Student Accomplishments

Accomplished principals recognize and celebrate students' accomplishments. These principals create multiple opportunities for ongoing recognition of each student, whether through awards ceremonies, bulletin boards, broadcast announcements, or other means. They recognize each student so that students become confident as individuals and learners, and take ownership of and have pride in their learning community.

ADULTS

Accomplished principals ensure that each adult is known and valued. They build strong, authentic relationships with adults that are intentional, purposeful, and inclusive—trusting relationships that enable them to have conversations that are courageous and honest. These principals actively listen, observe, and understand the power of language in communicating with adults. They are culturally sensitive, recognizing and honoring the diversity each adult brings to the learning community. Accomplished principals know the personal interests of staff members. They establish routines that foster rich relationships in which all adults have the opportunity to interact with each other and the principal in groups or confidentially, if the situation requires. These opportunities may include one-on-one conferences and grade-level, departmental, and other instructional meetings.

Understanding Human Development and Learning Theory

Accomplished principals apply their understanding of adult learning theory and human development, acknowledging what each person brings and how each person's social construct affects the learning environment. These principals create organizations of high purpose and energy, ensuring that each adult is an appreciated, contributing member. They create and maintain both formal and informal structures in order to foster positive relationships among adults.

Accomplished principals appreciate each adult as an individual with unique needs and strengths. These principals use their understanding of the people in the organization to help each one reach his or her greatest potential and find and own his or her place in the learning community. These principals determine the needs of each staff member and consider those needs when planning activities and events.

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They ensure that every adult feels like an integral part of the learning community, understands how their learning is important to themselves and their community, and wants to enhance their practice.

Accomplished principals reinforce high expectations for adults, so adults will have high aspirations for themselves and a personal sense of efficacy. For example, adults who feel a sense of belonging might collaborate with peers to create new classes or teaching arrangements.

Understanding of Adults in a Broader Context

Knowing that a well-grounded faculty is the hallmark of an effective learning environment, accomplished principals support personnel in balancing the demands of the work environment, the home environment, extracurricular activities, and professional study. They do this by establishing and nurturing relationships with everyone in the building. For example, they are aware of key events and dates that are meaningful to individual staff members. These principals differentiate staff members' professional development based on interests, needs, and technological expertise. Accomplished principals recognize and acknowledge their own obligations and limitations in nurturing relationships. They do not show bias or favoritism.

Accomplished principals work to maintain relationships by being visible throughout the building, by making a concerted effort to converse daily with staff members, and by being familiar with the family dynamics of the staff. They facilitate social opportunities at which families have an opportunity to get to know one another as well. They provide support as needed in individual circumstances. When assigning duties, they consider the personal circumstances of personnel and make equitable accommodations available without negatively affecting the learning environment.

Scaffolding Support

Accomplished principals understand that adults function in a world beyond the learning community. Therefore, these principals support those adults in the larger community, scaffolding resources and support from social, civic, community, and faith-based organizations. These principals know individuals well enough to understand why a given adult is not performing and whether they need support. These principals understand that underperformance may be due to a variety of professional and personal factors and counsel individuals when they perceive changes in demeanor or performance. For example, they might help locate resources for a teacher experiencing financial difficulties due to illness of a family member or a spouse's job loss.

Celebrating Adult Accomplishments

Accomplished principals realize that adult recognition is as important as student recognition and regularly recognize adults publicly in meaningful ways. They celebrate personal and professional milestones that adults attain. For example, these principals seek out opportunities to highlight life events, such as the marriage of a staff member's daughter or son, or the birth of a grandchild. They value when staff members receive community organization awards and show support by attending the event.

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Standard V: Culture

Accomplished principals inspire and nurture a positive learning culture. They promote a culture of high expectations and a collaborative spirit, where actions support common values and beliefs of the organization. These principals build and foster authentic, productive relationships. They honor the culture of the students, adults, and larger community, demonstrating respect for diversity and ensuring equity. They create a trusting and safe environment that enhances student learning and adult practice.

Accomplished principals realize that culture is the heart of the learning community and are passionately committed to creating and leveraging the culture so that every student and adult realizes their full potential. These principals embrace, value, and capitalize on the uniqueness of individuals represented in the learning community. They build and foster positive and productive relationships. These principals lead the intentional creation of a culture that generates excitement, encourages innovation and experimentation, and develops commitment so that maximum effort is the norm. They skillfully shepherd and intentionally navigate all elements of the learning community to develop a collective sense of high expectations, resulting in a high-performing organization. These principals work with all stakeholders to create and sustain a positive and caring sense of community that everyone can hear, see, and feel in all interactions.

Accomplished principals safeguard a culture of continuous improvement that values individuals, strives for high achievement for students and adults, and structures a productive and orderly environment. These principals work with stakeholders to develop such a culture, reflecting the values, beliefs, norms, traditions, and rituals of the learning community. They realize that a positive culture entails school safety as well as trust, inclusion, and a focus on high expectations for all.

Accomplished principals lead and model a culture that permeates all facets of the learning community and extends beyond the campus, inspiring others to get involved. For example, if local restaurant owners complain about student behavior, an accomplished principal would invite a conversation with the owners, present the issue to the student council, and empower the students to develop their own code of conduct. The principal would then reinforce the culture in which students, staff, parents, and businesses take responsibility for monitoring compliance with that code. In the learning communities of accomplished principals, the culture is so strong that it is manifested in student behavior throughout the community.

Accomplished principals nurture a culture that focuses on learning for students, staff, parents, and members of the community at large, one that values all human capital in shaping a learning environment that best suits the needs of all students and stakeholders and the demands of a global society. These principals model entrepreneurship; they access and capitalize on the resources of parents and the community.

Accomplished principals recognize that culture is the medium through which change is initiated and sustained. These principals skillfully embrace change that complements and advances the culture of the organization. They understand that change for the sake of change is meaningless, adds no value, and will not stand the test of time. When faced with a mandated change, they expertly guide implementation in a way that enhances rather than detracts from the culture.

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Shaping and Leading the Culture

Accomplished principals build a culture of high expectations for student learning and adult practice. They honor existing traditions, rituals, and physical symbols and work to ensure a strong link with academics. These principals demonstrate an understanding of the need for a culture that emphasizes a collaborative spirit within the learning community. They establish trust through teamwork and consensus building. These principals shape and maintain a culture in which adults and students demonstrate personal responsibility. They foster an environment that values effort, persistence, and engagement by all students and staff.

In collaboration with adults and students, accomplished principals develop agreed-upon cultural values and norms that are consistent with the vision and mission of the organization. They expect congruence between the stated values and norms and the actions of the students and adults. These principals form an organizational culture in which adults teach and model the essentials of good character. They unfailingly address individuals who act contrary to the norms by initiating critical conversations designed to maintain a cohesive culture of learning. They promote ownership and involvement in all phases of establishing and maintaining such a culture.

Accomplished principals constantly monitor the pulse of the culture. They build systems that incorporate qualitative and quantitative data to monitor and assess the culture, gathering such data through formal and informal means. They use data to initiate critical discussions aimed at enhancing adult practice that leads to the improved academic performance of students.

Ensuring a Positive and Safe Environment

Accomplished principals know that physical, emotional, and intellectual safety and well-being for students and adults are essential in building an atmosphere of high expectations. These principals foster a secure environment where mutual respect is the cornerstone of the culture. They work collaboratively with adults, external organizations, and students to educate all stakeholders, create systems, and monitor progress in maintaining that environment. These principals understand that in order to have a secure environment, they must have systems and plans in place. Accomplished principals systematically create structures to ensure safety. They create discipline and comprehensive crisis management plans. They ensure people understand the plans and can implement them. Accomplished principals exude a sense of calm, confidence, and adaptability when dealing with stress and managing crisis.

Accomplished principals recognize that first impressions send a message about the learning community. Their learning communities are clean, orderly, aesthetically pleasing, and ecologically friendly. In such learning communities, all stakeholders share in the responsibility of creating and maintaining a pleasant and inviting atmosphere.

Demonstrating Respect for Diversity and Equity

Accomplished principals collaboratively establish and implement policies, systems, and procedures that promote respect for diverse cultures, ethnicities, and lifestyles, including under-represented segments of the learning community. They engage all members of the learning community in processes that identify values and behaviors related to eliminating bias, intolerance, and inequity. Within established policy, these principals build and maintain a culture that fosters a free exchange of ideas and opinions without fear of retribution.

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Accomplished principals respect the cultural differences of a global society and make diversity a means for enriching the culture of the learning community. They work to establish a culture in which students find relevancy and are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to succeed. In the learning communities of accomplished principals, diversity is celebrated as a strength and a tool for learning and growing. Accomplished principals analyze and monitor classroom activities and assignments for cultural sensitivity and relevance. For example, in a learning community with a large Hispanic population, these principals may choose to offer a course that emphasizes the history and culture of that population.

Accomplished principals respect elements of student culture that support and are relevant to the learning environment. For example, they recognize that students may use multiple forms of technology for building relationships, communicating, and learning. These principals determine ways of teaching responsible freedoms for bridging the differences among students' culture, parents' culture, and staff culture for the betterment of the learning environment.

Accomplished principals understand that all students need role models and advocates to whom they can relate. When some groups are not represented in the learning community, for example, these principals reach out into the community to find volunteers and community members to fill this need.

Accomplished principals are keenly aware that the culture should embrace differences in skill areas, such as academics, the arts, and athletics, so that students with different interests are equitably recognized and celebrated. They demonstrate their respect for the talents and strengths of all students and adults by intentionally and consistently designing equitable recognition systems.

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Standard VI: Strategic Management

Accomplished principals skillfully lead the design, development, and implementation of strategic management systems and processes that actualize the vision and mission. These principals lead the monitoring and adaptation of systems and processes to make certain that they are effective and efficient in support of a high-performing organization focused on teaching and learning.

Accomplished principals are strategic managers as well as instructional leaders. They continuously pursue the optimal performance of the complex learning organization. These principals create transparent systems that bolster the sustainability and success of the organization, focused on results and consistent with beliefs and values.

Accomplished principals lead the identification, orchestration, and monitoring of all aspects of operations, from instruction to human and financial capital, to the physical plant and the administration of policies and procedures. These principals apply their knowledge, skills, and tools to design appropriate and sustainable management systems. They know when, why, and how to use these systems effectively.

Accomplished principals maximize the focus on instruction by developing systems that operate smoothly and preserve the integrity of the learning environment. They keep the entire organization focused on results and functioning at high levels of efficiency and effectiveness through their use of strategic management systems and processes. These principals are equally concerned with all systems for student learning. Because a well-managed building is paramount to student learning, accomplished principals must manage the systems and processes as well as they lead instruction.

Design and Development: Plan

Accomplished principals skillfully design and craft systems and processes essential to maintaining highly effective organizations. They collaboratively lead the development of management structures that engender ownership, commitment, and transparency. These effective management structures support accomplished principals in collaborating; responding with foresight, intention, and efficiency; and communicating with authority. Accomplished principals lead the development of goals and objectives that are in line with the vision and mission. Those goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-specific. These principals cultivate and advance structures to sustain all the elements required for the organization to realize its learning goals, such as human and fiscal resources, student achievement, student safety, and building management, and leave nothing to chance.

As part of the design and development process, accomplished principals properly orient all stakeholders to the need for strategic systems. These principals establish common language, understanding, and work norms. They implement strategic management systems that are calculated to support role clarity, enhance organizational discipline, and increase accountability for results.

Mindful of the disparate yet interrelated and interdependent aspects of the organization, accomplished principals make decisions understanding how systems affect one another. These principals collaborate with external and internal stakeholders to make informed decisions to minimize unintended consequences. For example, they are aware that a decision to adopt a new schedule will affect other systems such as planning time, state testing, lunch and bus schedules, and professional development, and they plan accordingly.

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Implementation: Do

Accomplished principals realize that effective implementation of systems will result in the alignment of goals, objectives, and resources and purposefully connect systems and processes. They constantly reflect on whether the systems are being implemented as designed. These principals monitor goals and objectives to determine if they are achieved, according to timelines and benchmarks, and within budget. On the basis of their findings, these principals work collaboratively to identify solutions, identify roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders, and establish expectations for performance and improvement.

Accomplished principals ensure that communication about systems and stakeholder access and utilization occurs on a timely basis. They strategically conduct public meetings and provide training for all internal and external stakeholders. For example, when introducing new technology for parents to access student information, such as grade reports, attendance, and discipline reports, these principals involve parents and the community in the implementation of the new initiative. All communications from these principals are intentional, clear, continuous, and focused on results.

Monitoring: Check

Accomplished principals consistently monitor the systems and processes against established goals and objectives, using all available resources and technologies. They design each monitoring effort to ensure equity and guarantee that all are justly served. These principals establish real-time and longitudinal data collection systems to monitor progress and trends to inform decisions. They develop processes and protocols for using the student data management system to effectively monitor the instructional program. They use the management structure to disaggregate data of all groups and determine further actions or interventions. For example, they may lead a gap analysis with teachers to determine why a particular sub-population is achieving and another is not in relation to a previously established expectation. Accomplished principals would analyze the results and use the findings of the root causes to develop a strategic plan and implement interventions.

When monitoring the performance of the organization, accomplished principals ask the following questions: Are the depth, breadth, and definitions of the strategies sufficient to achieve the intended outcomes? Are we on time, within budget, and on track for meeting or exceeding our established goals? Through a collaborative approach, accomplished principals make needed adjustments and communicate effectively, to keep the systems on track and aligned to organizational objectives. They use each step in the monitoring process to build greater ownership and commitment throughout the organization for the attainment of goals and objectives. After reviewing the process analytically and globally, these principals know whether or not to take action.

Continuous Improvement: Act

Accomplished principals constantly re-examine systems and processes. These principals recognize obstacles and barriers to parts of any system, and minimize or eliminate them. Such principals collaboratively prioritize actions to arrive at what is critical to achieving the goals. They continuously review and evaluate formal and informal processes, to support continuous improvement. As the organization changes, accomplished principals make certain that the systems and processes continue to add value to the organization.

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Accomplished principals use appropriate data to make informed decisions. Through a collaborative leadership structure, these principals collect and analyze data to determine appropriate action. They assume personal responsibility and provide leadership to the process. These principals take appropriate and corrective action, report the results to the stakeholders, and identify the progress made. They use their findings to justify resource requests and broadly communicate the current state of the organization to the learning community.

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Standard VII: Advocacy

Accomplished principals effectively communicate with all constituents to advance the organization's vision and mission. They identify and prioritize the critical challenges and key issues facing their students, the community, and the profession. They educate both internal and external stakeholders to adopt a position, garner support, and evoke action. These principals strategically seek, inform, and mobilize influential educational, political, and community leaders to advocate for all students and adults in the learning community.

Accomplished principals are driven by a deep desire to enrich the lives of those they serve. They passionately advocate—in multiple contexts for a variety of purposes—on behalf of students and adults in the learning community as well as the education profession. In alignment with the organization's vision, mission, and goals, these principals identify and prioritize their advocacy needs with external and internal stakeholders. To accomplish these goals, they engage in ongoing dialogue with representatives of diverse community groups.

Accomplished principals recognize and reflect on major issues confronting society that may affect the learning community, solicit input from individuals within the organization as well as the larger community, and take action. They strategically seek, inform, and mobilize educational, political, and community leaders to advocate for the best interests of the learning community. Accomplished principals courageously navigate the advocacy process to continuously promote the goals of the learning community, as well as the broader context of education as an essential element of a thriving democracy.

Leading for Advocacy

Accomplished principals systemically and strategically promote the well-being of the organization. They are effective communicators who relate to and reach all their constituencies and the larger community in ways that advance the organization's vision and mission. These principals apply their command of proven marketing theories and skills to foster a recognizable brand for the organization.

Accomplished principals are aware of the importance of using data to highlight and promote the positive aspects of the organization. They provide contextual background information and propose options to move the organization forward. They handle communication about issues in a competent, confident, timely, and reassuring manner, which includes using in-person, print, and digital means. When a crisis occurs, these principals skillfully use it as an opportunity to grow organizational capacity and to build trust and confidence in the community.

Accomplished principals are knowledgeable sources of information about teaching and learning. They use their understanding to guide their advocacy for educational practices and tools that they know will lead to successful and accomplished students. They seek actual and virtual platforms for sharing education's successes and challenges and are always available to educate others. In their roles as members of professional or civic organizations or as individual educational leaders, they advocate for the advancement of the profession.

Accomplished principals focus advocacy efforts on students, advocating for the welfare and well-being of each student. They use data to prioritize and address issues that directly affect students and their success in the learning community. These principals also advocate for staff, ensuring that these individuals have the tools and resources required to meet the organization's goals and objectives. Accomplished principals

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advocate for the learning community's best interest when a prescribed initiative does not serve the organization's mission.

Accomplished principals use effective and comprehensive communication with staff, students, and parents to guide all interactions and interventions related to advocacy. These principals carefully use multiple measures and instruments to assess needs and prioritize advocacy efforts. For example, they may use written and digital surveys of parents and students, conversations with colleagues, and administrative dialogue and discussions to construct fair and equitable advocacy programs and procedures. Accomplished principals lead advocacy efforts for programs and procedures that realize the vision, mission, and goals of the organization.

Advocacy in the Broader Context

Accomplished principals realize that a variety of parental, social, community, religious, political, and educational audiences have an interest in and are affected by the learning community. These principals capitalize on the multitude of possible resources of these audiences that can make major contributions to achieving the organization's goals.

Accomplished principals commit to a wide variety of advocacy efforts and charge internal stakeholders to build relationships, coalitions, and partnerships with external constituencies to enlist support and garner resources. They equip internal stakeholders with talking points and marketing plans so that those stakeholders have the information they need to influence key external groups with consistency of voice. Accomplished principals use a wide range of print and electronic media and attend a wide variety of stakeholder meetings and events, to make issues visible in the community as well as to recognize the importance of those stakeholders.

Accomplished principals are visible ambassadors in the learning community, and in the district, city, state, and nation. They deliberately form relationships with policy makers in these venues. These principals intentionally cultivate internal and external relationships—with colleagues, central office staff, and superintendents in the district as well as with partners in the community and in important policy positions. They invite community leaders in to learn about concerns and to celebrate successes.

Accomplished principals inspire members of the community to focus on ways they can contribute to the achievement of educational goals wherever they exist. These principals create collaborative networks and serve as advocates for education in the context of the larger community. They galvanize community leaders who have the resources to support funding, the political power to support needed policies, and the voice to champion educational causes.

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Standard VIII: Ethics

Accomplished principals are ethical. They consistently demonstrate a high degree of efficacy based on personal and professional ethics exemplified by integrity, justice, and equity. These principals work to establish a culture in which exemplary ethical behavior is practiced by all stakeholders.

Accomplished principals are ethical leaders who possess and demonstrate core values of integrity, honesty, and fairness. These principals subscribe to, model, and hold themselves and others accountable to a high level of personal and professional ethics. They establish high expectations for ethical behavior for themselves and for all students and adults in the learning community. These principals have the courage to lead appropriate and honest communication with all stakeholders. In making informed and just decisions, these principals demonstrate firmness and flexibility while upholding high standards of accountability to teaching and learning.

Accomplished principals systematically nurture the development of student character and adult professionalism. These principals understand the competing values, cultural norms, and beliefs of the learning community. They realize that these values and norms may, at times, create discord in the community, and they exercise political acumen from an ethical lens to achieve effective resolution. While these principals adhere to existing policies and regulations, they also advocate for the development of policies needed to promote and provide an ethical and safe environment for students and adults. These principals develop procedures to execute the policies. Accomplished principals are committed to creating a collaborative learning community, and they communicate high expectations for civic responsibility and commitment to the common good.

Personal and Professional Ethics

Accomplished principals understand that ethical behavior is paramount to their effectiveness as leaders. They realize that effective leadership emanates from their competence and their consistent, ethical behavior—not their title. By modeling personal and professional ethics, accomplished principals establish trusting relationships with all stakeholders as they adhere to and advocate for the creation of policies, procedures, laws, and contracts. Personally and professionally, these principals operate legally, consistently, and fairly in their words and actions.

Accomplished principals understand the role and power of perception as it applies to ethical judgment. They operate from a set of core values and are committed to the integrity of the decision-making process. These principals make decisions honestly and transparently, and communicate them skillfully. For example, they hire the person who best meets the needs of the position, regardless of internal and external pressures. Accomplished principals are unwavering in their decisions and adept at reconciling common sense with policy.

While believing in accountability for all, accomplished principals exercise compassion when difficult circumstances warrant support and encouragement. They respect and honor diversity, and question assumptions as they acknowledge and remove personal bias from their actions. Accomplished principals exercise confidentiality with discretion, while encouraging others to do the same. They reflect on difficult situations and, when faced with ethical decisions, use knowledge gained from past experiences to make wise, informed decisions.

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Establishing an Ethical Culture

By creating agreed-upon norms and shared expectations, accomplished principals establish the conditions for an ethical culture to be self-sustaining—one that does not rely on the principal's presence. These principals model a high degree of ethical behavior as they hold others to the same standard. They clearly communicate ethical expectations and ensure those expectations are aligned with the vision and mission of the learning community.

Accomplished principals provide for equitable opportunities and results throughout the learning community. These principals always examine intended and unintended consequences of policies and practices as related to their effects on students. As an example, they may establish open access to all classes for any student who expresses an interest.

Accomplished principals work with staff, students, and parents to establish a framework of ethical norms, beliefs, and values to govern behavior inside and outside the learning community. They influence other members of the learning community to be good citizens and contribute in a positive manner to the broader community. They are the catalyst, igniting a culture in which students and adults act on their responsibility to be good citizens and address inequities. For example, these principals model and create the conditions so that students and adults act altruistically to support those with limited resources.

Accomplished principals model and expect ethical behavior in all mediums of communication. For example, they navigate the fine line between personal rights and professional implications when members of the learning community use on-line social networks. Accomplished principals know and consider the ethical expectations of the community, the ways in which they compete and converge, and the manner in which these competing norms are resolved. They make certain that expectations and consequences are incorporated in the student character building program and in adult professional learning. Accomplished principals model adherence to norms and policies in their everyday interaction with students, staff, and parents.

Accomplished principals are conscientious about the ethical reporting and use of data. These principals immediately address ethical challenges, particularly those that detract from teaching and learning, in a professional manner. They resolve conflicts in a way that communicates strong ethics while maintaining respect for all individuals.

Accomplished principals use ethical challenges to facilitate teachable moments. They create psychologically safe and professional environments to discuss and resolve ethical challenges related to the learning environment. For example, in their learning communities, a teacher who is asked to change a grade to maintain a student's eligibility for sports is comfortable having a courageous conversation with the coach about not changing the grade. Accomplished principals hold all staff members to the same level of expectation, regardless of their personal beliefs and possible biases. These principals understand their legal and ethical obligation to protect the rights of others. When weighing the pros and cons of making a difficult decision, accomplished principals choose the right decision rather than the convenient one.

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Standard IX: Reflection and Growth

Accomplished principals are reflective practitioners. By critically examining their beliefs and practices, these principals build on their strengths and identify areas for growth related to their leadership. They collaborate with their colleagues, network, study research, and seek experiences to enhance their practice, expand their repertoire, and deepen their knowledge. Accomplished principals adapt their paradigm and practice to improve student performance and enhance teacher instruction.

Accomplished principals are highly reflective individuals who engage in continuous personal and professional growth. These principals honestly and continually assess their strengths and weaknesses and seek opportunities to improve. Based on the results of this regular assessment, they establish learning goals for themselves and develop a personal plan to attain their professional goals. These principals combine new learning with their professional experience and relevant data to improve their leadership, positively affecting adult practice and student learning. Accomplished principals step out of their comfort zones and take strategic risks. They seek new, different, and challenging experiences that enhance their individual and organizational capacity. These principals encourage self-reflection and self-renewal for themselves and others in the learning community.

Personal Reflection

Accomplished principals value self-knowledge and self-understanding. Through personal reflection, they examine their practice through the lens of equity, fairness, and justice. They use this process to determine whether there is a connection between their biases and their behaviors. These principals modify their behavior to safeguard against their biases.

Accomplished principals are lifelong learners who build on their strengths and identify areas for growth. They assemble a network of support and guidance by enlisting mentors, colleagues, critical friends, and other leaders from inside and outside the field of education. Through involvement in leadership and professional growth opportunities, these principals incorporate new learning into practice. They utilize the resources of local, state, and national professional organizations to enhance their personal and professional skills. These principals build a diverse leadership team with complementary strengths to balance their leadership. For example, in leading an organization, a principal whose strengths are conceptual would enlist and involve someone who is more detail oriented.

Reflective Strategies

From their investment in reflective practice, accomplished principals accrue benefits not only for themselves but also for the learning community. To improve their professional practice, they willingly invite, accept, and use feedback from others. These principals create systems that seek, value, and use formal and informal feedback from all who are affected by their leadership. For example, such principals may use a 360-degree evaluation approach to determine how others perceive them and then use the results to improve their practice. Accomplished principals also gather and consider data on the current condition of the organization. They equitably consider and respond to this information, linking the effectiveness of their leadership practice with the performance of the organization and making adjustments needed for their own growth and for the advancement of the learning community.

Accomplished principals are relentless in taking advantage of opportunities to reflect and to increase their professional knowledge. These principals recognize the importance of remaining current on educational

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research that supports their leadership; they see the interrelatedness of research in all fields to education. For example, they would read extensively on creating and cultivating a vision and mission before and while collaborating with staff in the creation of the vision and mission for the learning community.

Accomplished principals use technology as a powerful learning tool. They may participate in digital networks for communication among professional colleagues, use social networking tools for informal learning, or take part with professional colleagues in online learning communities. These principals use such learning opportunities to consistently reflect on ways to improve their practice of leadership.

Accomplished principals engage in action research as a reflective exercise. For example, in response to staff needs, they may develop a demonstration classroom to experience learning strategies for themselves before providing professional learning opportunities for their teachers.

Accomplished principals reflect on current research about student learning and effective teaching practice. They make connections with what is happening in other professional fields as it relates to instructional practice. These principals adapt their leadership as they reflect on the implications embodied in the research. They know that research is useful only when theory is bridged with practice based on their context. They use new research to enhance, without derailing, the organization and instructional practices.

Creating a Culture of Reflection

Accomplished principals know that constructive reflection is key to continual improvement of the culture within the learning community. They develop the ability of staff and teachers to reflect in the moment, in the midst of action, and then to conduct deeper reflection. These principals provide regular opportunities for self and group reflection with teachers to continuously improve teaching practices. For example, they may establish professional learning communities to provide a structure for collegial reflection.

Accomplished principals establish continued growth and reflection as a priority in the learning community. For example, they may see that teachers have a growth plan and review it continually throughout the year to inform their practice; cadres of teachers and staff may then discuss shared areas of strengths and weaknesses. These principals model and lead constructive, non-defensive listening and response to critique, so that this essential aspect of reflection is built into the culture of the organization.

Rejuvenation and Recommitment

Because accomplished principals realize the necessity of balancing their personal and professional lives, they intentionally create opportunities to celebrate their journey of growth. They understand the value of rejuvenation and engage in activities that allow them to renew themselves, so that they can be fully present in their work.